/75/

Introduction

/12/ [11] [10] [36] [16] It was solely with the intention of obtaining some elements of comparison for my Čipaya dictionary that I, in the company of Professor A. Posnansky, made a one week visit to the Uro of the Desaguadero in June, 1931. These Indians live in the village of Ancoaqui, on the right bank of the Desaguadero, about 25 kilometers from the Bolivian port of Cuaqui. There are only a handful of them, 40 at the very most. Even taking into account those who were absent and the small agglomerations spread throughout the region, I seriously doubt whether the remaining Uro number a hundred. It was, therefore, imperative to record their language. The case of the Uro is typical of the rudimentary and anarchic state of South American ethnography. For a long time these Indians have been considered one of the most interesting ethnic elements of the Andean region. Nevertheless, no one has thought of living among them and devoting a serious and methodical study to them. /14/ The excellent monograph of Dr. Rivet (1) and Mr. de Créqui

[Text continues on p. 3]

/13/ 1. Créqui Montfort (G. de) and Rivet (P.), "La langue uru ou pukina /The Uru or Pukina Language/," Journal de la Société des Américanistes de Paris, new series, Vol. XVII (1925), pp. 211-244; Vol. XVIII (1926), pp. 111-199; Vol. XIX (1927), pp. 57-116. To the texts assembled in this article the following must be added: /13/ /105/ McCutchen McBride (G.), "The Agrarian Indian Communities of Highland Bolivia," American Geographical Society Research Series, No. 5, New York, 1921, p. 17. "There are the Uros that dwell beside the Desaguadero, the river that drains

/75 cont./

113
105

Lake Titicaca. Subsisting chiefly by hunting and fishing, they ply their reed boats (balsas) among the wide-extended swamps that here border the river. Their houses are of rude construction, being built of mud and thatched with straw or totora, the bulrush from which their boats are made. They appear to be among the oldest occupants of the plateau.... They enter any discussion of land tenure only in a negative sense, as they are almost entirely landless. They practice little if any agriculture, though some of them now own small herds of cattle and llamas. They form the rare example of a highland Indian tribe which is not markedly attached to the soil, in contrast to the agricultural people that surround them." /Cited in English./

Ogilvie (Alan G.), Geography of the Central Andes. A Handbook to accompany the La Paz Sheet of the Map of Hispanic America on the Million Scale. (Published by the American Geographical Society of New York, 1922). Beneath a photograph presenting an Uro woman crushing some quinua (Fig. 30), these lines appear: "Uru Indian woman grinding quinoa in a sheepskin. The house is of mud with a thatch of reeds secured by grass ropes to pegs in the walls. The sack contains llama dung for fuel. The water jar is made of clay dug from a bank near by." /Cited in English./

113
114

After these lines had been written, Mr. A. Posnansky published a study on the